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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural exchange is germane to human growth.

EDITORIAL

We would wish you a merry Xmas. But we don't play that. We are, by no means, going to promote the celebration of a holiday based upon all manners of historical falsification and European myth-making. We aren't going to encourage you to fall into the "spirit of Xmas," when we know that that spirit is one by which you are sucked into spending money you can't afford to spend on trendy and unnecessary toys, baubles, clothes, etc., making, in the process, Caucasian-owned corporations more fat in dollars than they already are, while making you more thin. We aren't going to endorse the idea of our children identifying with an endless host of Caucasian Santas, Caucasian elves, flying reindeer, lumps of coal in stockings, and other such foolishness.

But we are going to tell you about some Xmas. For example, you might be interested in knowing how December 25th came to be celebrated as the birthday of Jesus. It wasn't until 325 A.D. that the Roman Catholic Church established December 25th as the birthday of Jesus, not because the Church had compiled information confirming that Jesus had been born on that date, but because Romans and other Europeans were already celebrating a number of holidays on and about that date and the Church decided that appointing December 25th as Jesus' birthday would serve to supplant these various celebrations of "pagan worship." What were some of these celebrations/observances? The Roman festival of Saturnalia, which was observed between December 17th and the 23rd, celebrated the winter solstice and the birthdate of the mythical Saturn, as well as Mithra. The birthdays of Tammuz, the Babylonian god of love, and Bacchus, the homosexual god of the vineyard, were celebrated on December 25th.

The origins of what we now know as "Christmas" were in 11th-century Europe and the term actually comes from "Criste Maesse"(old English). Xmas didn't become popularized in the United States

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until about the end of the 19th century when German and Irish immigrants brought the Xmas traditions with them.

What about the Xmas tree? AFRIKAN PEOPLE AND EUROPEAN HOLIDAYS: A MENTAL GENOCIDE by Rev. Ishakamusa Barashango states the following:

> "According to this legend, the first Christmas tree appeared in Germany around 716 C.E.(Christian Era) after an English missionary named Winfred, later dubbed St. Boniface, stopped some Germans from sacrificing their young prince to an oak tree. In those days the Germans and Scandinavians considered the oak to be sacred to their War god Odin or Woden, from which the Americans derived the day of the week called Wednesday. As a sign of the divine approval of Winfred's intervention the tale goes on to state that an evergreen miraculously sprung up out of the ground and the Germans who at one time were resolved to offer up their prince now turned to decorating the tree."

Santa Claus, or St. Nick, also has European origins, and comes from a variety of Northern European tales about grizzled old men or devils, riding about the countryside on goats or asses of Satan on Xmas Eve, to scare the hell out of misbehaving children.

There is quite a lot of very interesting information on Xmas, its origins, symbols, etc. What this information makes abundantly clear is that this holiday is of Europeans, by Europeans, and for Europeans. Is there something wrong with Europeans having their holidays? Nothing whatsoever. But there is something wrong with these Europeans taking a Jesus(whether historical or mythological) that, according to the Biblical record, had no European ancestors, and converting that Jesus into a Caucasian and declaring him to be the Son of God. There is something even

more wrong with African people allowing and even encouraging our children to be enraptured by the "white magic" of Xmas. What else can we call it when our children believe a fat Caucasian man, with a white beard and wearing a red suit, can deliver to them expensive toys they sense that their parents can't afford and, on top of this, actually get his fat ass down a chimney to deliver the toys? Besides, what is a Santa Claus who can ride through the sky on a sleigh pulled by reindeer if not just another version of Superman? Don't our children have enough--more than enough--images in their heads of super Caucasians?

How many billions of dollars have we spent this year in the U.S.? Maybe a hundred? How much of this will have gone for Xmas gifts? How many community-run education centers might we have established with just our Xmas expenditures? How many cooperatively-run industries? How many acres of farm land saved from bank foreclosures? When, in 1966, Maulana Karenga developed the concept of Kwanzaa, this foolish expenditure of our precious little money is one of the things he had in mind, one of the factors that motivated him to construct for us an observance to replace Xmas in our lives. The following is an explanation of Kwanzaa, its functions, symbols, etc.

The nguzo saba(kiSwahili for "seven principles") are umoja(unity), kujichagulia(self-determination), ujima(collective work and responsibility), ujamaa(cooperative economics), nia(purpose), kuumba(creativity), and imani(faith). These principles were culled by Maulana Karenga from his studies of African history and cultures. He determined that these were the most crucial of the principles contributing to the greatness which Africa was able to achieve and the most important to African people in our efforts to deal effectively with our present-day situation here in the United States of (occupied)America. Each day of

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinctions between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to Africans are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa(p.k.a. D. Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 1200 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. Submitted poems should not sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68542-2500.

Kwanzaa, which runs from Dec. 26th through Jan. 1st, represents one of these principles, beginning, of course, with umoja(unity).

We've got Africans in this country who are liberals, Africans who are conservatives; Africans who sell crack to their people, Africans who turn their own people over to the police; Africans who wear traditional African clothing but lack real consciousness, Africans who express pro-"black" political views but have no awareness of the importance of cultural identification with Africa. Unity does not mean that we must be mental clones of each other. But it does mean that we should share an awareness of the seriousness of our situation and take steps to arrive at consensus on some basic issues and act in a manner consistent with such a consensus.

Self-determination means that we should do things for ourselves and not be always looking to our oppressor for solutions, answers, and programs. This is not to say that we should release the United States of (occupied)America from its responsibilities to provide services our tax dollars pay for, to turn over reparations for the more than three hundred years of our foreparents' forced labor, etc. But the principle of self-determination does demand that we develop our own institutions and ensure that they serve our collective interests, that we deal with conflicts among our people on our own and not act as agents of Caucasian-run institutions.

When we speak of collective work and responsibility, we're talking about taking the "me-ism" out of our way of doing things, How many of us hear anything these days about the organization that Malcolm founded, the Organization for African-American Unity? What has happened with Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition? We can't send individuals out to carry our load. There is too much to be done. Besides, what happens when our heads are assassinated, discredited, or otherwise neut-

ralized? Too often, our organization or movement bodies die.

There are nationalists and/or pseudo-nationalists who dismiss socialism as a European idea and promote "black capitalism," as if capitalism weren't a European concept, itself. We know, or should know, that traditional African societies were generally communalist, with respect to economics and most other aspects of life. What is communalism if it isn't the original socialism, without the gutting of the recognition of the spiritual component of humankind and the divorcing of economics from other aspects of life? We should understand that it is the spirit of capitalism that motivates Michael Jordan and other "super-stars" to push super-expensive products to those for whom they have the greatest appeal--those of our young who can least afford these products. It is the spirit of capitalism which motivates an African actor(male or female) to play roles that demean African people, that trivialize our concerns, etc. "It's a career move, baby."

We must act with purpose, not just because something or other feels good. We are facing a situation of urgency and can't afford to be doing things out of impulse or because other people are doing these things.

We have formula-music, music designed to be commercially successful and which is utterly lacking in creativity. We have hack-politicians who have nothing to offer us, in the way of solutions to problems, but worn-out cliches. We need creativity in all areas of our lives. We need to make use of the power of our imagination to bring beauty into our lives and resolution to difficult problems.

And, finally, if we only look at the impirical evidence of what our conditions are and use this as the basis for determining what the prospects of our bringing about revolutionary change are, we

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ZAWADI(gifts)

In the spirit of Kwanzaa, we present to you the following gifts of insight.

Another Perspective On The Crucifixion

In Christian religious tradition, it is stated that Jesus died on the cross and suffered so that "we"(whites) can be "saved"(survive). White (Christian) theology goes even further to speak of Jesus "shedding his blood" so that we(whites) can "live" and have "everlasting life." Only in recent years has genetic material ceased being referred to as "blood." Always there has been (and in some circles it continues) discussion about individuals having "black blood" or "white blood" when what was really meant was Black or white genetic material or genes, respectively.

Thus, Christian (white supremacy) theology can be translated: Jesus(a Black man) shed his Black genetic material in a crucifixion, which in reality was a castration and a killing, so that the white recessive population, in fear of its genetic annihilation, could be saved(genetically survive). Thus, Jesus is called "savior" by the whites. Is it little wonder that the holy day celebrated for the death of Jesus is referred to as "Good Friday?" And a television series that represented a socially and politically castrated Black male similarly was referred to as "Good Times." The historically "good nigger" has been the "dead nigger."

In keeping with this symbolic order, there is a song in the Christian religion called "Nothing But The Blood of Jesus." The chorus is as follows:

Oh precious is the flow,
That makes me white as snow
No other font I know
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This can be translated as, "As long as the gene-

tic material from the Black male is spilling on the ground from castration, whites can remain white as snow."

The pattern of worshipping a suffering, dying Jesus on the cross is fully comprehended only when it is understood that Jesus was a Black man and that the black wooden cross represents the Black male genitalia separated from the man. Only by the removal and destruction of the Black male genitals can whites have "everlasting life" in the most fundamental genetic sense. Jesus, of course, had to be rationalized as willing to make this "castration-sacrifice" -giving up his genes - so that whites might live.

Dr. Frances Cress Welsing, from THE ISIS PAPERS

Understanding The Nature Of Us

Basic to the Black outlook is the rejection of the dogmatic all good, or all bad approach to life... No one is all good, or all bad. Life is made up of a complex changing balance of joy and sorrow, hope and skepticism and ups and downs.

Our political movements have reflected this understanding of the complementary relationship between the sacred and the political...

Black people respect the spiritual side, but realize that more than a divine force is required to solve a man made, political problem. Religion or a strong spiritual belief can give a people the faith or inner determination necessary for a determined liberation struggle. This inner faith only has meaning when it is backed up by a concrete down to earth program of political action...

The schizophrenic western approach which separates the spiritual from the political, and lacks soul, will not reach the masses of our people. It is the Black intellectuals who have been trained in

western thought, whether it is liberalism or Marxism, who find the purely intellectual, theoretical approach to organizing appealing.

Oba T'Shaka, from THE POLITICAL LEGACY OF MALCOLM X

On Getting Up And Moving Forward

Easy it is to fall into the trap of loneliness if we forget that our people are not just of the present, not just the walking multitudes of murdered souls and zombies now around us, but many, many more gone and many, many more to come. Because it is useless to locate hope in the already destroyed; it is the method of the lazy hypocritical soul, courting despair so as to spare itself the necessity of action. As reasonable as it would be to visit the cemeteries there to wait upon the dead to rise to our conversation. Yes, there are many whose semblance of life is all trapped within the present death. But what are we if their numbers alone should depress us into immobility? What are we if we see nothing beyond the present, hear nothing from the ages of our flowing, and in all our existence can utter no necessary preparation of the future way?

Ayi Kwei Armah, from TWO THOUSAND SEASONS

Integration: Getting What Some Of Us Wanted

Integration has been the carrot which, from the beginning, has kept us running. Historically there have been crossroads of time in which we might have chosen to resist oppression or to join the oppressor. Each time we have chosen the path which we thought would lead to acceptance by those who will NEVER accept us. We wanted to be integrated into this grand society; we dedicated our efforts and our art to proving that Black people were human, too, and

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PRESS RELEASE

(The following are excerpts from a statement delivered on Nov. 21st by S.E. Motsoko Pheko to the 21st session of the U.N. Special Political Committee.)

"While the euphoria grows and the deception spreads that the South African regime is serious about fundamental changes in South Africa, and all sorts of excuses are being made to deal with South Africa by people who claim to be committed to the dismantling of apartheid and destruction of colonialism; facts reveal that these changes are only superficial and cannot dismantle apartheid. In fact, the situation is becoming not only for the colonized Africans in South Africa, but for the Frontline States and later the rest of Africa - just as it happened as a result of the Berlin General Act of 26th February 1885. The regime is being rehabilitated, groomed by its traditional backers to be the 'regional power' and 'economic power house' for the rest of Africa...

"Today the oppressed are being asked not to call or use terminology such as 'Pretoria regime', 'racist, colonialist regime', etc. because there is 'change' in South Africa. The oppressed and dispossessed people of Azania are being asked to speak of 'President' F.W. de Klerk. The colonized Africans in Azania, some declare, must no longer be discussed under colonialism and self-determination because this is 'irrelevant' to the South African situation. This thinking and approach to our problem of colonialism and apartheid can only be described as the most scandalous in this last decade of the 20th century. However, the national liberation movements and political organizations in Azania continue to call the so-called 'government' or 'authorities' the regime, because the South African regime is still racist, colonialist and representing the minority and the indigenous African majority population is still under alien rule and voteless...

"The regime has refused to comply with the UN Declaration of 14 December 1989. According to the Human Rights Commission based in South Africa about political trials and prisoners; as of September 1991, there were 476 political trials, 2,659 accused. There were 689 political trials in progress in the Orange Free state, 122 in Natal, 96 in Northern Cape, 57 in Western Cape and 130 in the Bantustans so-called homelands. The total number of 'security' prisoners was 250, that of the 'unrest' prisoners 1200. This makes a total of 1450 political prisoners. In the South African death row there are 333 people...

"The regime is advertising for immigrants in Europe with lucrative offers and citizenship rights.. Some have joined the regime's army against the Azanian People's Liberation Army(APLA). The regime has also granted immediate citizenship to mercenaries from Angola, Mozambique and Namibia...

"The genocidal white-on-black violence which the regime is implementing through the Koevoet Battalion housed at a base in Moordkop in Northern Transvaal, Buffalo Battalion 32, Selous Scouts from former Ian Smith's Rhodesia and Renamo elements are deployed. This is besides the sterilization of African women and encouraging the askaris infected with AIDS to sleep with African women so as to spread AIDS among the Africans in order to reduce the African population...

"In South Africa, white civilians possess 2.5 million guns. Any white person over the age of 18 can possess up to 28 guns bought over the counter. In addition to this, twenty tons of guns have been imported by South Africa from the USA according to Africa Fund based in New York...

"The Star(Johannesburg newspaper) recently appealed to President Makwetu of the PAC, to prevail over the Azanian People's Liberation Army to suspend its arms. That was after several white police and soldiers were killed by PAC guerrillas.

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Of course, it is strange that newspapers should make this appeal only when a few armed whites of the regime's security have been killed, but not when thousands of Africans die everyday.

"The de Klerk regime has repealed the legislative aspects of the 1913 and the 1936 Land Acts, the Group Areas Act and tinkered with the Population Registration Act...

"The whites can keep this vast land without legislation. The voteless Africans have no money. They cannot buy land anywhere because of supplementary legislation which stipulates that a land or property owner cannot dispose of his or her immovable assets without the consent of his or her neighbour or community. This imposed 'self-determination of community interests' literally maintains the status quo with regard to land and residential segregation...

"On the crucial issue of who should draw up the new constitution, several positions have been advanced or suggested. The regime has proposed a Multi-Party Conference to discuss the new constitution. Participants to this so-called Multi-Party Conference will be invited by the regime on the basis of 'proven support'. This means that any paper parties representing no viable constituency may take part in this conference. The aim of the Multi-Party Conference is to pack the negotiating table with all and sundry, but mainly with unrepresentative elements that support or are subservient to the minority racist regime...

"Serious and genuine negotiations must be between the regime and representatives of the Patriotic Front. The PAC and other organizations of the

oppressed have demanded a Transitional Authority which involves the international Authority such as the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The regime has no sovereignty in our country. That sovereignty was usurped through colonization and aggression. The manipulation of international law that has taken place in South Africa to deceive the world, that South Africa is not a colony, has not fooled the dispossessed people of Azania to accept this gigantic colonial fraud and fallacy of this century in Africa.

"The way forward is not to be gullible and intimidated by those who no longer serve the interest of the victims of apartheid and colonialism in South Africa, but their own interests."

KWANZAA

will surely throw up our hands and give up the fight. In order for us to be about the business we need to be about, we must have faith in ourselves and each other and believe in the power of our spirit to fulfill our dreams.

These are the very concrete and "practical" functions of the nguzo saba(seven principles). But, beyond these functions, there is the need for us to become in mind and spirit who we are in our genes. Too many of us, while we have African physical characteristics, lack any kind of African consciousness and are, thus, fish out of water, acting against our own interests and feeling estranged from our motherland and divorced from our ancestors. By observing Kwanzaa, we return ourselves to the arms of our ancestors and take steps to become our African selves.

that we(at least some of us) were worthy of acceptance as equals to white people. We sought equality of opportunity. Hat in hand, we requested, we cajoled, we begged...

What happened? Through herculean effort we got what we really wanted, deep in our secret hearts, even as we talked black and slept white: we got integration.

We have integrated ourselves to death. What had originally meant equality of opportunity became an embracing of all things white...

Now the most educated and affluent among us are absorbed into the white world. They live in white neighborhoods, go to school with white people, go to white churches, work in a white workplace. They have protected their children against the agony of being Black in this country. But they have also robbed their children of any knowledge of our history. They have little contact with anything Black. They have no Black heroes except those approved by the white establishment. They have few, if any, Black friends. More and more, they marry white people. They do not find their families of origin beautiful, and so they deny their own authenticity...

The ones who have yielded to the siren song of integration are strangers to both worlds. They are the lost.

Eugenia Collier, from THE RACE: MATTERS CONCERNING PAN AFRIKAN HISTORY, CULTURE, AND GENOCIDE

TRANNOUNCEMENTS

"The National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and Aunt Jemima brands of The Quaker Oats Company brought together many of Washington, D.C.'s most prominent female leaders today for a very special leadership breakfast. Held at the Willard Inter-Continental Hotel, the program paid tribute to NCNW's tradition of supporting and recognizing Black, female leaders in their efforts to improve the quality of life for African-American women and their families..." (Emphasis added)

Source: "Black Women Leaders Hailed," from the Nov. 30 THE ATLANTA INQUIRER

"For rall/winter '91, hair is soft and volumized with longer layers. It's the fashion hair look of the '60s, with a '90s appeal. As a result, perms are making a resounding comeback...

"'Straight hair gives you more versatility today', states Owen Sandy of Owen Sandy's Hair Design on Lexington Avenue..."

Accompanying the article from which the above passages are excerpted are two photos of an African woman with dark skin and other characteristically African features. The "before" photo shows the Sister having her hair blow-dried and curled. The "after" photo has the Sister smiling at us, apparently pleased with the work that's been done. The caption under the photo reads: "AFTER: RELAXED & SOFT HAIR STYLE--Judy Sandy looks lovely in her new look. Her hair has a full shape with bangs."

The article was written by the fashion-and-beauty editor of the N.Y. AMSTERDAM NEWS, Renee Minus(?) White. Emphasis and question mark added. It appeared in a recent edition of the NEWS, under the title, "Fall Hair: The Look Is Straight."